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Fond Of The Dark

IN WHAT Allen W. Dulles has to say about how much information the public should be given, the concern of a conscientious director of the Central Intelligence Agency with national security is apparent. Mr. Dulles writes in U.S. News and World Report:

"We Americans publish a great deal in our scientific and technical journals and in congressional hearings. . .

"I would give a good deal if I could know as much about the Soviet Union as the Soviet Union can learn about us by merely reading the press."

In the cloak and dagger kind of operation in which CIA is engaged, this distrust of public information is logical enough. A measure of it is necessary and desirable in the man who heads such an agency.

But what Mr. Dulles forgets is that only when information about the operation of a government is readily available can a democratic people govern themselves properly. Only when scientific and technical findings are published and exchanged can scientists and technicians help each other push forward, even when they are separated by national boundaries.

As we were saying just the other day, there is reason to question whether any government agency — even the CIA — should be permitted to operate entirely in the dark. It would appear that Allen Dulles has operated so long in an absence of light that he actually has grown quite fond of the dark.